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Appl. No. 10/768,364
Docket No. 8590D
Amdt. dated October 11, 2006
Reply to Office Action mailed on May 11, 2006
Customer No. 27752

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REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 9-16 are pending in the present application. No additional claims fee is believed to be due. Per this amendment, Claim 9 has been amended to further define the sheet of conductive material as being integral. Support for this amendment is provided at page 11, lines 3-11 of the specification. Claim 9 has also been amended to further define the step of incrementally stretching the bonded laminate to separate the integral sheet of conductive material into a plurality of discrete spaced, parallel flat conductors. Support for this amendment is provided at page 13, lines 17 and 18 of the specification.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a)

The Final Office Action rejected Claims 9, 11 and 13-16 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Harlow (US Patent No. 4,000,348) in view of Hairabedian (US Patent No. 3,459,609). According to the Office, the term, 'sheet' is broad and must be interpreted as such. Harlow discloses an embodiment wherein copper circuits are employed in place of wires (Column 10, lines 25-29) and according to the Office, these copper circuits meet the limitations set forth by the generic term 'sheet'. The Office further finds that Hairabedian teaches incremental stretching referring to Column 6, lines 42-52 and column 7, lines 6-14. Thus, according to the Office, Applicant's invention is not patentable over Harlow in view of Hairabedian.

It appears that the Office has misconstrued the subject matter of the Applicant's claimed invention. Particularly, step (c) claiming bonding said first and second web materials to said third sheet of conductive material in a face-to-face layered relationship thereby forming a bonded laminate and step (d) claiming incrementally stretching said bonded laminate to form a plurality of spaced, parallel flat conductors. As described at page 13, lines 17-21, the incremental stretching separates the conductive sheet into discrete, spaced, parallel flat conductors. In other words, the method claims forming a bonded laminate including an integral sheet of conductive material which is separated into a plurality of parallel flat conductors as a result of incremental stretching. Applicants have amended claim 9 hereunder to emphasize these specifics in the claim.

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As stated in the Office Action, Harlow discloses a method of creating an electrical cable wherein the method includes providing first and second webs (T, T) of dielectric materials, providing conductive wires (C) (or copper circuits), and laminating or bonding the webs and wires (or copper circuits) in a face-to-face layered relationship. Hairabedian discloses a method and apparatus for fabricating flat cable by encapsulating an array of wires between heat bondable dielectric webs. Each case discloses bonding a plurality of wires (or copper circuits) between two webs. The processes disclosed in Harlan and Hairabedian do not involve bonding an integral sheet of conductor material between the webs to form a laminate and subsequently incrementally stretching the bonded laminate to separate the integral sheet of conductive material into a plurality of discrete spaced, parallel flat conductors. In other words, the number of wires or copper circuits between the webs of Harlan and Hairabedian is the same before lamination or bonding as after lamination or bonding regardless of whether the wires or copper circuits are stretched in tension according to Hairabedian.

Furthermore, Hairabedian discloses stretching the wires during the lamination process to achieve a final wire spacing. (See Col. 6, lines 42-52; Col. 7, lines 6-14.) Since the stretching is controlled by the amount of tension placed on the finished cable, the stretching is induced lengthwise on the separate wires. Such stretching may aid in maintaining alignment of the separate wires during the process; however, it does not form a plurality of spaced, parallel flat conductors from an integral sheet as produced by incrementally stretching the bonded laminate as claimed.

In fact, none of the references cited in the Office Action, alone or in combination, disclose bonding an integral sheet of conductor material between two webs and subsequently incrementally stretching the bonded laminate to separate the integral sheet of conductive material into a plurality of discrete spaced, parallel flat conductors. For instance, Ostman discloses feeding a conductive metal sheet (50) which is cut or slit to form individual conductors before being laminated. (Col. 5, lines 34-53.) Abuto discloses a method of making a nonwoven laminate by providing a first and second web (14, 16) and a third sheet (12) which is elastomeric and may include a conductive material. The combination does not teach or suggest incrementally stretching a bonded laminate

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comprising an integral sheet of conductive material to separate the integral sheet of conductive material into a plurality of discrete spaced, parallel flat conductors. Consequently, claims 9-16 are patentable over the foregoing references.

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Conclusion

In light of the amendments and remarks presented in this response, it is requested that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103. Early and favorable action in the case is respectfully requested.

This response represents an earnest effort to place the application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as now claimed from the applied references. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of this application and allowance of Claims 9-16 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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